BALLET TODAY

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ROWENA JACKSON

BALLET TODAY

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Cover Portrait.

Rowena Jackson as Aurora *by Houston Rogers.*

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Alicia Markova, who is dancing at the Royal Opera House, London, this month (*see* **Backstage,** *page* 5).

NEXT MONTH'S SPECIAL FEATURES—

Marilyn Burr's Career in Pictures.

Men in Ballet: Louis Godfrey.

Peggy van Praagh's work abroad.

Part two of *Notes from my London Diary, by Galina Ulanova,* in which the great ballerina relates:

How she was greeted by Covent Garden porters.
Meets the Lord Mayor of London . . .
Describes her experiences at the television studios . . .
Dreams of the great oak trees in Windsor Park . . .
Films Giselle *through the night . . .*
Finds a visitor in her dressing-room . . .
Visits Stratford-on-Avon . . .
Sums up the Englishman. . . .

July issue of Ballet Today will be published on 19th June.

Photo (*right*)

Even Swan Princesses have their chores. Louis Godfrey sits patiently whilst his wife, Marilyn Burr, cuts his hair. Marilyn is frequently called upon by the other boys in the Festival Ballet Company to practise this useful hobby. Both Louis and Marilyn will be featured in our July issue.

Photo: B. Angove.

Notes from

MY LONDON DIARY

By

GALINA ULANOVA

The ballerina's own account of the Bolshoi visit to London

I DID not keep detailed notes. My diary consists of a list of appointments—performances, rehearsals, film and television studio engagements, concerts . . . But as I run my eye down that long list I recall everything that happened in England, day by day, and my memory conjures up a series of pictures each brighter than the one before. It is often so, when you are terribly busy and excited and new impressions jostle each other like pieces in a kaleidoscope you think everything is slipping by unnoticed, leaving no trace on your mind, just adding some more coloured strands to the tangled skein of your memory . . . Then, as time passes, the most vivid and interesting things come to the fore and things that are insignificant and petty recede into the background so that everything that for one reason or another made a deep impression on you at the time stands out in your memory with special emphasis.

And so I begin.

Monday, October 1st, 1956.

Vnukovo Airport. The last minutes before taking off from Moscow. The cabin of our TU-104 is warm, and, for an airliner, quite roomy and comfortable. Soon our three TU-104's will take off and in some three hours the Bolshoi Theatre ballet company will be in London.

Nothing is certain, however. Everything went—or should I say everything flew?—just perfectly: we were steadily approaching England—one of our dancers, Susanna Zvyagina, who edits the Bolshoi Theatre's paper *Sovietsky Artist*, had already sent a radiogram back from the plane. ". . . In a few moments we shall be over Britain. Before this message reaches you, we shall have left this aeroplane . . ." We were already looking forward to meeting our comrades of the Bolshoi Theatre who had preceded us by a few days, and those members of the Sadler's Wells company, who we knew, were at this very moment gathering at London Airport to meet their Moscow colleagues; we were already imagining our first rehearsal on the stage of the Covent Garden Royal Opera House where we were to appear for a month . . . Suddenly we flew into a belt of dense fog, the famous London fog, the plane had to alter course: apparently there was not a slightest hope of landing at London Airport.

Our TU-104 landed at a military airfield at Manstone, some way out of London. We had to pass some wearisome hours before we could set out in cars for London. The fog dispersed. The road was very beautiful—lush green woods and meadows suddenly swam into sight, but that was little consolation: everyone realised that we had lost our first working day and that if our season were to begin punctually, that is on October 3rd, we had only one rehearsal day left. That did not seem anything like enough.

The nearer we got to London the worse the weather grew. It was simply poisonous. Now the rain was pelting down and everything was shrouded in fog. At last we arrived. Covent Garden. A noisy, clamouring, overpowering crowd of reporters. And then, thank God, the hotel—quiet, warm and cosy.

Terribly tired and tomorrow morning an early rehearsal. Quickly to bed . . .

Tuesday, October 2nd.

It must have been before six this morning when they began preparations for the rehearsals at Covent Garden. By nine the company had assembled. The sets were still being put up when the first rehearsal began. We know how eager the public is to see us; we simply do not have the moral right to postpone the opening of the season by even one day. That means we have only today to rehearse.

True, our English friends are giving us every assistance: the scene-shifters, the musicians, and the actors who are being engaged locally for the crowd scenes—all are working splendidly. But how shall we manage everything? How shall we who are to perform on the opening night accustom ourselves to the unfamiliar stage and prepare ourselves physically and mentally, the way every artist has to do if he is to work creatively?

The rehearsal continues, with a short break for lunch, until 1 a.m. What is going to happen tomorrow?

Wednesday, October 3rd.

Tomorrow has come. I don't think I have ever felt so scared in my life; I feel I am going to the scaffold. Where can I hide? Nowhere . . . There is nothing to be done about it—we've begun.

I cannot describe how this evening passed. The reaction of the public was unusual, strange: at one moment the auditorium was incredibly silent, and then there would come a storm of applause the like of which, we were told, Covent Garden had never heard before. This was good news to us, especially as today's audience was no ordinary one. It was largely made up of professionals of the London stage, both musical and legitimate, ballet enthusiasts from all over Europe, professional ballet and theatre critics and connoisseurs of the dance. London society and political circles were well represented; the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, was present with Lady Eden and finally there were people in the audience who remembered the great Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova and the performances of the Diaghilev company and the work of its ballet-master Mikhail Fokine, so original in its time, the beginning of the present century.

In other words, we were being watched not only with interest,

goodwill and natural curiosity but in a searching, critical spirit; our work was being compared with the best examples of the past.

But if they applaud, if they receive us *this* way, it must mean they like us.

Thursday, October 4th.

Morning. The newspaper headlines are enthusiastic. *Romeo and Juliet* received excellent notices. A complete triumph, it might be assumed. But for some reason, I recall Feuchtwanger's phrase "success is sweet" and I decide that in this the author whom I respect as one of the best writers of our times is not quite right. Success is not sweet. It is the result of so much effort, so much incredibly hard work that in comparison with the expense of the artist's forces even genuine, unquestioned, serious success—the success of Art—gives only a tiny fraction of satisfaction.

Yet this brief moment of satisfaction is joy itself. Every artist, and especially one who, in Stanislavsky's words, experiences "the joy of serving his country," feels a deep sense of satisfaction when he sees that not only his own work but the art of his fellow-countrymen—an art that extols Man, with his love, devotion and heroism—exercises a power over the most discriminating audience. Our success is conceded by all. Or nearly all. Those few critics who say that our scenery and choreography lacks interest or inventiveness are perhaps right from a professional point of view, but they cannot deny that our ballet appeals directly to the human heart and makes the audience weep and laugh, love and hate by means of music and the dances that give the music visible shape.

However, we have still three ballets to show. Let's see what they say about those.

Tuesday, October 9th.

Party at Margot Fonteyn's. The prima ballerina, one of the founders of the British national ballet, has contributed much to its growth. The Sadler's Wells company celebrates its twenty-fifth birthday this year. No one would deny that British ballet has achieved a great deal during this short period.

Margot Fonteyn is the wife of Panama's ambassador in London; a beautiful woman, she received us in national dress. The guests gathered in a large hall, leaving their coats and furs about the place and sitting on the steps of a broad staircase, smoking, singing to the guitar, drinking, laughing, dancing . . . It was all very natural, relaxed and informal.

Sunday, October 14th.

Our free day. We are all worn out. The preceding days have been one heavy round of work and events. Now London has seen all our ballets. In *Swan Lake* our youth excelled—Nina Timofeyeva and Nikolai Fadeyechev, Nina Chistova, Lyudmila Bogomolova, Marina Kondratyeva, Boris Khokhlov . . . Levashov and Farmanyants had enormous success in the character dances of Act III. What a good thing it is that we have so many gifted dancers! How fine it is that the reception these dancers have been given, and the recognition their talents have obtained will inspire them and spur them on to perfect their skill.

In *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* it was the Tatar dance, the krakowiak and the mazurka which particularly pleased the audience. And once more that most important thing, the truth to life, the power of expressing feeling and of expressing it naturally, won general recognition. Struchkova as Maria, Lapauri as Girei, Viltsin as Zarema, and Evdokimov as Nurali were warmly received by the public. The last ballet in our programme was Adam's *Giselle*. Again I felt petrified with nervousness, again I dreamed of a miracle—a postponement or my replacement by someone else . . . *Giselle*, after all, is so well known in England. The English have seen all the best dancers in the name part, and such a strong tradition of the production and its interpretation has grown up in their country. I wonder whether they will understand the point of our interpretation, and, if they do, whether they will agree with it?

How nice to be wrong! How nice to feel that once more you have been understood, that the Soviet ballet—its realism, its depth of feeling and its vitality, yes, even in the romantic *Giselle*—has "got across" to all, has conquered all hearts! We had fourteen curtain calls. The public was frantic. I saw the glitter of tears, heard all kinds of kind words, felt the handshakes of scene-shifters standing in the wings. But when I was asked to say a few words before the microphone all I could manage to blurt out was: "I am deeply moved, more than I have ever been before . . ."

We danced *Giselle* again on the following day. The unanimity of the press notices and the public was really touching.

And now we are enjoying our day off. But we have to count that in minutes too. A beautiful excursion down the Thames; a visit to one of the royal palaces with its ancient moss-covered walls—graceful, noble architecture—harmonious lines and proportions and . . . but there was no time to go inside to admire the antique furniture and plate, the vaulted halls and ancient towers . . . We had to return to meet our companions in art—English dancers and ballerinas. From them we heard so many words of appreciation, so many expressions of delight, all the more precious to us because they came from professionals, from people who were past masters of their art.

We talked a lot about the time when we would see them dance on the stage of our Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. We exchanged autographed copies of our programmes, we were delighted that we had established really friendly relations between comrades in art keenly and sincerely interested in each other's work. . . .

After our meeting with the artists of the Sadler's Wells company we went to supper—there was English pudding—at the home of one of the leading members of the British Soviet Friendship Society. It was a joy to discover that despite language differences, despite the fact that to make ourselves understood we had to resort to practically every European tongue and had much fun over our improvised "international language"—everyone in that cosy room understood each other perfectly and got on with each other in the friendliest way.

There was one of the dancers from an Indian ballet troupe which was performing in London at the same time as our season. This troupe is led by one of the most popular Indian dancers in the world, Ram Gopal, the ballet-master and performer of Indian dances.

The Ram Gopal troupe was far from being the only one performing in London that month. I shall mention only one of the others—Antonio's Spanish dancers. This well-known dancer was also showing his latest work and it was arousing interest among the British public. In short, we had "competition," but that, it seemed, did none of us any harm: the British people are great lovers of the dance, they understand its finer points and appreciate variety and skill in performance. They see all the best ballets in the world. So it was all the pleasanter to discover practically everywhere we went how much love there was for the Soviet ballet.

Reproduced by kind permission of "Soviet Literature."

Above: Raissa Struchkova as Maria and Alexander Lapauri as the Khan in The Fountain of Bakhchisarai.

To be continued in our next issue

BACKSTAGE

ALICIA MARKOVA

An opportunity which should not be missed during this month is to see Alicia Markova dance at the Royal Opera House, London. Her engagements take her out of England so often these days that it is strange to think there must be many people, especially the younger generation, who have not seen her dance *Giselle*. Markova will give seven performances between May 30 and June 22, which will include two matinées. Philip Chatfield will partner her in *Les Sylphides* and David Blair in *Giselle* and *Aurora's Wedding*. In July Markova will again dance at the Nervi Festival.

FESTIVAL BALLET

More than a hundred people attended the inaugural meeting of the Festival Ballet Club held in London on the 17th April. Anton Dolin, who was to have taken the chair, was delayed owing to the French rail strike, and Dr. George Hall, now P.R.O. for Festival Ballet, deputised. The Constitution of the Club was adopted after minor amendments had been suggested. Miss Shirley Godden, who first had the idea of starting such a Club, was appointed Secretary, and created the first Honorary Member. The membership subscription is 10s. a year, and junior members (under the age of 16) 5s. a year. Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, 59, Sloane Street, London, S.W.1.

Dr. Hall in addressing the meeting told of the tremendous success which Festival Ballet had in Denmark during their current tour. He also remarked upon the interest shewn by the Press in Denmark, and displayed leading Newspapers giving front-page coverage to Festival Ballet's visit to Copenhagen. "Although," he said, "I personally saw the news of the Copenhagen success go out over Reuters, only two English newspapers gave a report."

I cannot personally speak for the newspapers, but I do know from my own experience that getting news of Festival Ballet is more difficult than from any other Company. Except for their season at Festival Hall, the rest of their year could be completely forgotten if one did not perpetually *scratch* for news. Up to now it has been wellnigh impossible to obtain new photographs, photo calls are not held, and few press handouts are sent out.

I do hope in the near future arrangements will be made to send the news home to the dance Press when the Company is on tour.

SIGURD LEEDER

A Festival of Modern Dance is being organised for Sigurd Leeder to celebrate his tenth year of teaching in London. The organisers plan to arrange lectures, demonstration classes and performances of past and present students and do everything possible to draw public attention to the value of Sigurd Leeder's work here in London and abroad. It is hoped that this will also lead to the launching of a Sigurd Leeder Association of Modern Dancers who can then keep in touch with each other all over the world. The first text-book of the Jooss Leeder Method will be published some time before July. The Festival is to be held from 11th to 29th June.

LUISILLO

Luisillo and his Company now touring South Africa until June 1st, will then tour France.

INAUGURAL TOUR

The Western Theatre Ballet, which opened at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, on 18th June, 1956, is now to make a tour of Devon, Somerset, Bristol and the West Country. The Company, under the direction of Elizabeth West and Peter Darrell will consist of ten professional dancers, and the repertoire will include *Peter and the Wolf, Pulcinella, The Prisoners, Celeste and Celestinha, Tableaux Vivants*, and Modern and Classical Interludes.

LONDON SEASON

The Royal Ballet will have a short season at the Opera House, Covent Garden, preceding the fifth American tour. It will be for two weeks from 19th to 31st August.

BALLET RAMBERT FOR CHINA

Ballet Rambert are to make a tour of China during October and November this year. The final arrangements have yet to be made, but they will have a season in Peking and the programme will include *Giselle* and *Les Sylphides*.

. . . AND IN NOTTINGHAM

In our May issue David Benn pointed the way to co-operation between local Ballet Clubs and visiting Companies of dancers. Nottingham Ballet Club really excelled themselves when Ballet Rambert recently visited their city. There is not room here to report all that Miss Nevin, the indefatigable Secretary, did to make sure everyone knew Ballet Rambert was on its way, but one good idea was to arrange for the Company to be shown round Nottingham's famous Council House, where they were welcomed by the Mayoress. Both the Mayor and Mayoress attended various performances during the week, and on the last day went backstage to present each member of the Company with a Nottingham lace handkerchief as a souvenir of a highly successful week.

EDUARDO AND NAVARRA

The Eduardo and Navarra Spanish dance group begin a short season at the Winter Garden Theatre, Eastbourne, on May 30th. Programmes will include classical and flamenco dances of Spain, and dances of South America and Mexico.

* * *

Toni Lander was appointed a Knight of Dannebrog by King Frederick IX during her visit to Denmark.

* * *

Christl Zimmerl, eighteen-year-old dancer at the Vienna Staatsoper, has recently been created a ballerina.

BERYL GREY

Beryl Grey gave her farewell performance on the 18th April when she danced for the last time as a permanent member of the Royal Ballet, in *Swan Lake*. There has been a great deal of speculation and many rumours about the real reason behind Beryl Grey's resignation from the Royal Ballet. Beryl herself has said very little except that she wants to dance more often. When we were collecting information for our Career in Pictures feature in September last year, Beryl told our interviewer that she had "a secret hankering for a comedy ballet-part, and hoped that someone, sometime would create a real comedy role for her." Afterwards she asked us to delete this line from the article. Perhaps

Beryl Grey

there were other "secret hankerings" and maybe she stifled them all. A pity, because no Company can afford to lose a dancer of her calibre. Good luck Beryl—we know wherever you go you will be a great success; we all hope that you will now get that comedy role you have waited for so long.

September, 1956 issue containing Beryl Grey's Career in Pictures can still be obtained from Ballet Today office, price 1s. 9d. post paid.

LONDON BALLET MONTH

By

A. V. COTON

BERYL GREY

THE big news event of recent weeks has been Beryl Grey's departure from the strength of The Royal Ballet, an occasion marked by her giving a "farewell" (but, happily, not a "goodbye") performance of *Swan Lake* on April 18th. It is her intention to accept engagements with other companies for stage, film or television work, or to appear as a guest artist with companies which can offer her suitable roles and suitable occasions for the dancing of them. Not least, Miss Grey made clear in her modest and very touching farewell speech from the stage at Covent Garden, she will appear again there from time to time as a guest with the company she has so successfully adorned for all her working life so far.

NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION

So many factors govern the behaviour of managers and directors and choreographers in big scale ballet companies nowadays that it is doubtful if anyone can accurately put down on paper a satisfactory explanation for her departure—that is, an explanation that accounts for the entire points-of-view of Beryl Grey, the management of the company, her friends and followers in the dance world. In her own type of dancing, in roles which give her good opportunities, she has been absolutely unique; she is in perfect condition and has been dancing exceptionally well throughout the whole of the past year. But she has, of course, had remarkably few special roles made—or adapted—for her. The fact of being slightly taller than the average leading dancer (in her own, or any other famous, company) was no serious disability, and ought to have presented a moderate challenge to choreographers both to create roles on her special talent, and to match her with a first-class partner sufficiently tall to appear appropriate beside her. The slow development of the male strength of this company in recent years, and the consequent lack of a group of suitable partners, have worked against her best interests . . . not that it would have been impossible, at any time in the past eleven years, to recruit male dancers from elsewhere who could worthily have supported her and also been useful acquisitions to the company in their own rights.

What is certain is that the total explanation of why her career has had to suffer this undeniable setback while she is only in her thirtieth year, will not be known until the years have slid along and a few of the more curious aberrations of managerial policy during the past decade can be decently discussed without anyone's feelings being badly bruised.

BALLERINA STARVATION

The long-expected—at least long-expected at various points since February, 1946—situation of "ballerina-starvation" is now visible at Covent Garden. Fonteyn is—Heaven be thanked—still at the very top of her form on ninety-nine per cent. of her appearances, but (no matter what the billing says) there is a noticeable difference between what she does and how she can do it, and the accomplishments of the dancers next in rank to her. Of the top four, one has ballerina-potential in enormous quantity and is likely to emerge in the topmost rank fairly soon; the others have each a very specialised talent which is well used in one *genre* of dancing, in one field of dance-expressiveness, in one style of characterisation. Behind is a long list of notable and sometimes very individual soloists . . .

Once, a few years ago, we had a situation in which Fonteyn, Shearer and another high-ranking dancer were all ill, or engaged elsewhere, at the same time; the gallant efforts of soloists to rise to the demands of ballerina-roles led to some memorably curious performances; a state of affairs that no managerial pronouncements can ever quite efface from the regular audience's collective memory.

MALE DANCER'S PROGRESS

But, by contrast, it is a continuous pleasure to see the rate of development among the whole general contingent of male dancers; with a few exceptions (who will not be mentioned in this column now or in future) the male dancers are—in their own kind of work—as worthy of attention as the females—a state of affairs not frequently met with in any ballet company over a very long stretch of years. But to consolidate these talents and their gifts, and to advance the art of Ballet suitably simultaneously, will require some very special casting, some specially devised new ballets, some brilliantly arranged revivals, during the next year or two. Let us wait and see how the company's choreographers respond to this very real challenge which, in terms of time, is immediately round the next corner.

MODERN DANCE

A sudden spate of activity in fields of dancing not closely related to Ballet has been occurring recently, with groups of various sizes (and very various degrees of talent) giving programmes of Modern Dance. The most disappointing aspect of the Arts Theatre recital of Lisa Czobel and Alexander von Swaine early in April was to see how their expressive power has remained unaltered over a period of years. Less than in Ballet, the dancers in the free-er styles can rely on the same repertoire over and over; because—to generalise and simplify—their kinds of dance have less visual appeal than ballet usually has, they have to project "atmosphere," "characterisation," "content" or whatever it is, more and more forcefully, subtly and completely each time they appear.

ELIMINATING PAST ERRORS

Because these styles are comparatively new to our Theatre, there is still a lot of work to be done to make them fully acceptable to mainly ballet-conditioned audiences, and whether they like it or not, Modern Dancers have to accept the burden of eliminating the worst errors of taste wrought by the earlier dancers in these styles. What wooed them in Hamburg or Vienna in the 1920's (even in the 1930's) isn't good enough for today. The only interesting Modern Dancers are those who perform a lot of "modern" dances (i.e., up-to-date in ideas, expressiveness, and technical brilliance). Of the three most notable other recitals given recently that of the staff and students of the Leeder School at Easter was the most rewarding. Jean Cebron's highly individual fantasies (*Aquatic Vision*, *Ambiguous Monster*, *Horse*), Joan Cox's subtly comic *Pobble* (from Edward Lear's poem), and Ludmila Mlada's solos and duets are—in these so-different but so-expressive styles—as fascinating as the best sort of things being done around the more famous ballet theatres today.

British Dance Theatre has for long worked on what seem to me a too-narrow basis of technique and a too limited field of choreographic notions; one or two of its female dancers, particularly Molly Kenny, give delight and keen pleasure with all they do, but too many of the dances are based on subjects or ideas not easily translatable into convincing dance-form.

SPIRITUAL SWEAT

As with choreographers everywhere—and notably in Modern Dance and in semi-professional Ballet—there is not enough serious thinking into, and around, and through, the ideas that come up for scenarios . . . like playwrighting, choreography needs a lot of "spiritual sweat" about the subject matter before the shape of the thing is committed on to the performers, and that's just what isn't happening in big enough quantities among all the ballet and dance companies now functioning around us . . .

LEARNING THEIR CRAFT

Which brings me round to a favourite hobby-horse—That you cannot expect to breed choreographers unless you provide the conditions in which they can scientifically *learn their craft* before they try to express themselves as artists. At present most managements believe that you are "born with" choreography, as you might be born with blue eyes or pixie ears—which, as Euclid said somewhere, is Absurd. Choreographers have to learn how to use Space, Style, Bodies, Music, Stagecraft, Lighting and a few dozen other pieces of apparatus, and isn't it obviously better that these tricks be taught by competent masters, than that the budding dance-creators should pick them up haphazard and one-sidedly—and mostly subconsciously—while dancing in or watching other people's ballets and classrooms? A big question which requires an equally big answer, but I am ready to bet that it won't be answered for some time yet by anyone in a big, responsible position in any of our native ballet companies.

BALLET TODAY is now on sale in the following countries: Argentine, Australia, America, Belgium, Brazil, China, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, Greece, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Rhodesia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Singapore, Switzerland, Trinidad, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, Italy, Monaco.

News from the World

Photo right: Colette Marchand and Milko Sparemblek in Les Baladins.

MONTE CARLO

FOR the Easter season the Société des Bains de Mer was inspired to form the Ballets de Pâques under John Taras as maître de ballet. Milorad Miskovitch brought his Ballets 56 company, including Claire Sombert, Veronica Mlakar, Tessa Beaumont, Milko Sparemblek and Vassili Sulich. To this accomplished group were added Vyroubova, Colette Marchand, Josette Amiel and Youly Algaroff, giving us a nine day season of exceptional interest.

Taras wisely avoided too great reliance on the ultra modern and arranged a well balanced series of programmes in which the abundance of talent at his disposal could be shown to best advantage. Five premières were produced.

Among these *La Forêt Romantique*, a ballet blanc in the classic tradition by Taras to music by Alexandre Glazounoff and décor by Georges Rheinhard was themeless and decoratively set in a forest glade. Built around Vyroubova, with Sombert, Mlakar, Helène Armfelt, Sparemblek and Sulich, the audience was obviously delighted at the appearance of a new ballet of this genre.

For *Eternel Amour*, to music by Richard Strauss and with décor by Levasseur, Serge Lifar came from Paris to see his own choreography. Based on the life of Don Juan the ballet opens with Algaroff as the libertine and Amiel as the girl who personifies his amours. Arthur Plasschaert, as the Commander and figurative betrayed husband, appears and is killed in a duel. His spectre haunts the lovers until, while mocking the statue of his victim, Don Juan is borne away to the underworld by the ghost.

Les Baladins, music by Jean-Michel Damase, choreography by Taras and décor by Levasseur, is a delightful light ballet that reminds one of a nursery rhyme. This effect is heightened by the very simple and effective music, well played by a wind quintette. Among a group of strolling players Sparemblek pursues the flirtatious Colette Marchand until the wife appears with a young family. Aided by two ridiculous policemen she vainly attempts to secure the truant, who escapes with the flirt when the chase has led elsewhere.

Marchand and Miskovitch beautifully danced the gay and humorous pas de deux *Soirée Musicale*, to music by Rossini arranged by Britten, choreograhy by Taras and décor by Levasseur.

Irène Lidova and Miskovitch also chose this occasion to introduce *Quatuor*, a pas de quatre to music by Raffaelo de Banfield and choreography by Sparemblek, who himself danced this attractive modern little ballet with Mlakar, Beaumont and Sulich. The finish and brio of the dancers was warmly applauded.

Among such a feast of premières known fare came as some relaxation. Vyroubova's dancing as the sleepwalker in *La Somnambule* was quite lovely—sensitive, fey, ethereal. She was ideally partnered by Miskovitch, who made a noble poet. Beaumont was most effective as the coquette and Taras grim and dignified as the baron. Levasseur had skilfully built the décor to the limitations of the stage and Taras' adaptation of Balanchine's choreography eliminated the "longueurs" often reproached to this ballet. The dancing of Mlakar, Armfelt and Sulich in the divertissements greatly contributed to the enthusiastic reception given to this ballet.

The title role of *Prométhée*, a feature of the repertoire of Ballets 56, was superbly danced with great dramatic force by Miskovitch, ably supported by Sombert and Mlakar.

Vyroubova and Algaroff certainly made the most of Lifar's pas de deux "*Roméo et Juliette*", a "potted" version of the famous tragedy. But the ingenious introduction of the balcony and death scenes, en vignette, was somehow not entirely convincing.

Three Taras-Levasseur ballets composed for the wedding celebrations of the Prince of Monaco or the National Fête last year were revived. *Le Rideau Rouge*, first known as *Entre Cour et Jardin*, was danced by the Miskovitch group. Well designed to show the considerable individual talents of the dancers, who all seemed to seize their opportunities with joyous eagerness, the ballet proved a delightful "pot pourri" of finished dancing.

Suite New-Yorkaise bubbled as gaily and lightly as at its birth in the ambiance of the Prince's wedding, de Monfred's music renewing its insidious appeal. Marchand danced with her inimitable and typically French "espièglerie", which was well met by the male grace of Sulich. The corps de ballet fully entered into the general gaiety. In no way highbrow this ballet has much popular appeal.

Fanfares pour un Prince, created for the Prince of Monaco at the Gala dinner at the International Sporting Club on April 15th last year, seemed somewhat fussy out of its original context. But musically and choreographically it is quite an attractive ballet. Sombert and Sulich danced well the roles created by Toumanova and Oukhtomsky.

Dessins pour les Six—*Design for Strings*—proved a good opening ballet, Sparemblek and Sulich perhaps outshining the danseuses. *L'Echelle* proved too abstract and modern for a Monte Carlo audience. It is also too long and repetitive. This is no reflection on the excellent dancing of Beaumont, Sparemblek and Sulich.

Jacques Bazire conducted his very experienced and able musicians with masterly reserve through the long and varied series. Much credit is due to the Casino atéliers which produced the majority of the décors and costumes. There was an obvious and general improvement.

An announcement is expected soon following discussions now well advanced for the formation of a new Ballets de Monte Carlo company, which would inherit worthily the great traditions of the past. Taras as maître de ballet and choreographer would bring a young, active experienced brain to the direction. Levasseur has shown extraordinary versatility in his décors and costumes. It is probable that many of the dancers who have formed Ballets de Pâques would be available to the new company, forming an ensemble of high and varied talent. Such an enterprise would undoubtedly receive the enlightened and enthusiastic patronage of the Sovereign Prince and the Princess Grace.

J. R. FARRINGTON.

HOLLAND

MOST notable event of the month in Holland has been the visit of the Ballet Company of the Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie, Brussels, which gave a performance in the Hague on 15th April. This company has for some time been under the direction of M. Jean-Jacques Etcheverry, and the choreography of all four ballets presented on this evening was his. The first, *Quatre pour Quatre*, a rather odd but not unpleasant mélange of ballet and tap-cum-musical-comedy dancing, was followed by a "choreographic study" entitled *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Fauré). This contained some interesting use of the corps de ballet as living decor, but was unfortunately costumed in the mode of all-over tights of which one grows increasingly weary, and showed a rather irritating lack of musical sensitivity. The third number on the programme was the most successful: a version of Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Here the choreographer was complete master of his theme and material, and created a spectacle of extreme tension, lightened momentarily with touches of savage humour. The leading roles were extremely well performed by Dolores Laga (the Girl) and Andre Leclair (the Mandarin). Had the evening but ended there the total impression created by the company would have been extremely favourable. However, M. Etcheverry unfortunately chose to close with a version of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* that was a disaster from every angle.

This company seems young, enthusiastic and full of talent, and the standard of performance, if judged by the *Mandarin*, would seem to be well above that of the average Continental opera-ballet. If M. Etcheverry cannot be placed among the great as choreographer, he is obviously invaluable as teacher and possessor of the ability to inspire young dancers.

Besides the *Casse-Noisette* and *Hoops* of Walter Gore planned for the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Ballet der Lage Landen, to take place in Amsterdam on 29th May, Peter Darrell is to mount his ballet *The Gift*, originally created for a performance sponsored by the London Ballet Circle in the autumn of 1955. The roles created by Julia Farron, Gilbert Vernon and Susan Salaman are to be danced in Holland by Ine Rietstap, Johan Mittertreiner and Andrine Leclerq.

Mr. Darrell hopes to get *The Gift* completed in two weeks, after which he goes to Dublin in mid-April to produce the ballet in *Aida* for the Dublin Grand Opera Society. This completed, he next returns to England to join a new company, the Western Theatre Ballet, using ten dancers and with choreography by Elizabeth West, Ronald Wilson and himself. This new company begins rehearsals in mid-May and opens with a tour a month later; it will perform in the smaller towns not visited by either of the Royal Ballet Companies.

JANET SINCLAIR

VIENNA

ANOTHER series of ballets given at the Staatsoper on March 24th included *Nutcracker*, *Spectre de la Rose* and *Boutique Fantasque*. Only the abridged version of *Nutcracker* was given, plus the introduction and finale. With the exception of the grand pas de deux which had the traditional choreography of Lev Ivanov, all the other numbers were given entirely new choreography by Gordon Hamilton. The decors and very charming costumes were by Georges Wakhewitsch.

In the Oriental dance, so often pure chi-chi, Gordon Hamilton has devised an intriguing departure from the usual by introducing three figures, a woman carried by two men, journeying across the desert. It reminded me slightly of *Cléopatre*—a ballet of Diaghilev's never seen these days. Lucia Schwab as the woman achieved a curiously snake-like undulation of the arms, which was quite uncanny. Seemingly she is boneless.

The grand pas de deux, including the sugar plum fairy's solo, was danced with great brilliance by Edeltraut Brexner and Richard Adama. As in the *Black Swan* which she danced the other evening, Brexner again displayed that authority and attack which reveal the true ballerina's quality. This attack induces a sort of hypnosis that holds the audience spellbound. Or maybe a particularly sympathetic audience induces the ballerina to dance with such spontaneity that her performance savours of an improvisation. In both cases the spell is there.

Richard Adama supported Brexner most gallantly and his short pas seul showed his gradually increasing rapidity of turn to great advantage. But of this young American dancer I shall have more to say in another article.

Spectre de la Rose, if it is good, seems to be over in a flash. A really fine spectre can turn it into a dream as much for the spectator as for the girl, but this is a rare experience nowadays.

A great deal depends, too, on the poetry of the opening tableau. In the performance under review Margaret Bauer—a dancer with great purity of line and lyrical charm—stands by the open window with the moonlight streaming in on her. Her wrap falling from her shoulders, she glides very slowly into the room, seats herself in the chair, and sleeps. If this little prelude is really well done, and it was, the audience is already half way towards accepting this ballet for the masterpiece that it is. But rarely, very rarely, is such a mood achieved.

And then, suddenly, Willy Dirtl as the rose spirit is wafted in with the moonshine. So beautifully, so convincingly can this young man dance, leap, and act, that it almost seemed that here before our eyes was indeed the spirit of the dance and not just a mere dancer pretending. No, I never saw Nijinsky, but surely his performance must have been something like this.

But there should really be a note in the programme asking people not to applaud when he leaps through the window (at the end), otherwise the girl's sad awakening to reality goes for nothing. And Margaret Bauer did that little finale, as well as the girl's growing passion during the dance itself, most beautifully.

It has been stated recently in the British Press that some male dancers are disappointed because they never get as much applause as the girls. That they should be more gallant and not expect it is by the way. But the following recipe is suggested for the ambitious young man, and I can think of just one such in England who might be able to do it: dance the spirit of the rose really beautifully, then change yourself completely and appear, 20 minutes later, as the can-can dancer in *Boutique Fantasque*, and with equal success. The applause should then be up to your expectations!

And that is precisely what happened here: Willy Dirtl brought off the double event very largely on account of his astounding versatility and a clever make-up. And he certainly deserved every clap of the prolonged applause which greeted him at the end.

But of the ballet itself: the choreography was by Erika Hanka, revised by Willy Fränzl. With the exception of the decors, the production was quite the most sparkling I have seen for some time and, so far as I remember, was similar to that of the Ballets Russes at the Empire as long ago as 1919. But the decors by Stefan Hlawa resembled more a factory than a toy-shop and produced a gloomy effect. Of course this may have been intended so as to throw into relief the rich variety of costumes (by Erni Kniepert).

Special mention must be made of Christl Zimmerl as the graceful Queen of Hearts; of Erika Zlocha and Heinz Weitz as the poodles, whose antics and amorous propensities were cleverly portrayed; and of Dietlinde Klemisch who, with Willy Dirtl, danced the famous can-can and the adagio. Klemisch is a tiny dancer with a mischievous twinkle and aplomb that are quite irresistible. She is so supple and light that she can hurl herself into Dirtl's arms from some distance away with true Viennese abandon. Her elevation in the can-can was really remarkable.

All these ballets were conducted by Buisler Klobucar with great sympathy and understanding.

ROBERT PATERSON.

FRANCE

THE only false note which marred the festivities offered by Paris to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, was the choice of programme for the spectacle at the Opéra on the evening of April 8th. Indeed, the presentation of *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle*, a ballet in two acts by Serge Lifar, score by Philippe Gaubert and décors by Cassadre, seemed inappropriate for such an occasion. One would have liked a more varied programme consisting of several grands divertissements, which would perhaps have pleased the illustrious sovereign more. The Queen herself must have shown some uneasiness as she spoke with the stars for a few minutes in the royal box at the interval.

"Are there a lot of deaths in the second act?" one could imagine the Queen asking Mlle. Lyane Daydé, the star of the Opéra, who was dancing that evening with Michel Renault.

"Three, but not *me*," Mlle Daydé might well have replied.

"I hope all ends well," continues the Queen.

However that may be, the theatre looked splendid that evening. This presentation will remain in the memories of those who saw it as the most brilliant since the Liberation.

On March 28th, there took place at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, the official inauguration of Le Théâtre des Nations, planned and created by the director A. M. Julien, who thus carried out the wishes expressed on January 29th, 1955, by 23 nations affiliated to the Institute International du Théâtre at the Zagreb conference.

If in the three preceding years, the Théâtre des Nations has only been concerned with drama, this year it planned to include lyric and choreographic art.

Thus it has been possible to see the choreographic troupe of the Belgrade Opéra in three ballets with choreography by Dimitrije

(*cont. on page 16*)

Dame MARGOT FONTEYN

Part Three

HER EXCELLENCY THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADRESS

AT THE PALACE

THE Mall is in a state of excited animation. Crowds line the footpaths and eager eyes are turned towards the carriage way, scrutinising with appraisal the lovely toilettes of beautiful women reclining in limousines on their way to a State Ball.

Outside Buckingham Palace the long line of diplomatic cars snakes its way towards the portico; liveried attendants hold open big swing doors. Dignified ambassadors, wearing their orders and decorations, sweep up the broad staircase with their ladies, attendant attachés following respectfully behind. They take their stand in appointed places, each separate embassy a compact, individual group.

Away in the distance, as far as the eye can reach, stretch the wide salons, hung with old masters, mirrors, silken drapes; lit by crystal chandeliers. Lights are reflected in the gleaming parquet floors, glint from the gilt of fragile furniture and picture frames. There is a hush of expectancy; then the royal ladies appear, passing in stately procession, lights flashing from their diadems, the stars of their orders, their jewel-encrusted miniatures. They stop before each group with a few well-chosen words of recognition and welcome—dispensing "Court holy-water," as the saying goes. In the distance the faint melody of a dance orchestra, the waiting buffets laden with all the grandeur of royal gold plate. A triumph of showmanship—a scene it would take a theatre-trained connoisseur fully to appreciate!

The Queen halts at the Panamanian group, greets with a special smile of friendly recognition the slim, dark-eyed Ambassadress, Dame Margot Fonteyn de Arias.

METEORIC RISE

This is indeed a moment of triumph for the enchanting ballerina who started as a 15-year-old recruit to an impoverished company struggling to make its way by entertaining under-privileged audiences who could not afford West End theatre prices! Not since Adelina Patti, the diva of Covent Garden, burst like a small blue flame on the brilliant Parisian Court of the Second Empire has there been such a meteoric rise to social eminence, straight from the entertainment world! With this important difference: that, whereas Patti lived in an age which still looked askance at the "meddling" of women in world affairs, Dame Margot can enjoy without restraint her private happiness, her public acclaim, and her social link with royalty, leading an active, constructive, experience-filled life of service, filling her

Above: Dame Margot and her husband await their guests at their home on Independence Day

allotted place with dignity in every sphere, and abundantly reaping the honours that accrue.

BRILLIANT RECEPTION

The position of Ambassadress carries with it certain responsibilities and duties which, despite the many demands of her career as a dancer, Dame Margot has no desire to shirk. Already the Panamanian Embassy is becoming famous for its select little dinner parties, at which she presides as a delightful hostess; and the company of the Ambassador's lady is eagerly sought at other diplomatic functions which her husband, in his official capacity, is in duty bound to attend.

Panama's National Day was celebrated, for the first time since Dame Margot's marriage, with a brilliant reception at Thurloe Place last November. Wearing the national costume, a white, wide-skirted dress heavily embroidered with large red flowers, the Ambassadress looked a picture of enchanted youth, her slim grace carrying to perfection the flamboyant bravura of the exotic gown. That brilliant occasion will be long remembered by those who were privileged to take part in it, for the Panamanian National Day is destined not to be celebrated every year in this fashion. When it comes round next time, Dame Margot will be with the Royal Ballet on tour.

DAME MARGOT AT HOME

"Has your Excellency ever thought of creating a permanent home in Panama?" I asked.

"Alas, no! I haven't finished furnishing this one yet," replied Dame Margot, and a quick glance round indicated the many dreams that lurk in that little dark head, the many personal details still wanting to reveal the sensitive tastes of the Embassy's châtelaine.

Yet this pleasant house in a backwater off the busy Brompton Road is full of character. A veritable sun-trap in fine weather, it has had a wealth of imagination bestowed upon it, and presents a true reflection of refined Anglo-Panamanian taste.

Not a curtain veils a single one of the long, wide windows, though there are heavy cloth hangings which can be drawn at night when cosiness is welcome. The house is built round the angles of a small, square garden, with a lawn from which flowering bulbs rise sturdily. In the centre stands an ancient tree with a bird-house perched on its branches. A tiled corridor leads from the Spanish-style lounge to the private apartments, its austerity softened by an abundance of cherished pot-plants, and the tiny study on the first floor, where Dame Margot works with her secretary, looks onto a roof garden banked with roses. Its walls are deep red, with a black dado; red-shaded lamps provide rose-tinted light when the drapes are drawn. There is a small desk littered with papers at one end, and over the fireplace hangs a glass case in which is displayed a marvellous collection of huacas, the little images or charms of solid gold which the Indians used to make in old Panama.

"They are rare now," said Dame Margot. "You generally find them only in graves. My husband found one himself, in a grave," she added proudly. "No, he is not really an excavator—it was just a lucky chance."

HAPPY MARRIAGE

Life is full of lucky chances for this happy couple. The glow of romance still envelops them. "What is the use of being married if you are not together?" Dame Margot says—and so, with all the manifold tasks and duties of their separate existences they plan their engagements in such a way that domestic demands shall have their due and that, when separations are inevitable, they shall be of the shortest possible duration.

Text by **ELIZABETH CORATHIEL**

This third chapter concludes the present Margot Fonteyn series. Parts One and Two are still available from BALLET TODAY office 1s. 9d. each part, post paid.

Above: Dr. Arias and Dame Margot greeting H.E. The Japanese Ambassador and Madame Nishi. Photo: Cine-Photo-Art.

Photo (right) Dame Margot stands beneath the famous portrait of her by Pietro Annigoni. She is wearing the "Pollera" dress (Panamanian National costume) presented to her by her husband, Doctor Roberto Arias, Panamanian Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, May, 1956.

This photograph and the one on page 9 are by *Erica* and published by kind permission of THE DIPLOMATIST.

Rowena Jackson

ROWENA JACKSON won the Royal Academy of Dancing scholarship in 1941, the first dancer from New Zealand ever to achieve this, but as the war was then in progress she was unable to get to England. In 1947 she eventually came to this country, and joined Sadler's Wells Ballet the same year. Her first role was that of one of the friends in *Boutique Fantasque*.

In the years that followed Rowena travelled to many countries—the United States, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Holland and a return visit to her native country, New Zealand. Of all the countries she has visited she says she prefers to dance in England, with America coming second for its appreciation and enthusiasm. The most exciting experience however was her return to New Zealand after eight years, during which time she had already become famous as a ballerina with the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

Rowena has never really considered any other occupation than ballet, but when she was very young she thought nursing a very noble career and toyed with the idea of becoming a nurse. However this did not materialise, and she has not since had the urge, not even to try out any latent aptitude on her own family!

Her mother has travelled from New Zealand three times to join her, and although they have always wanted to make a home of their own they have never been able to get down to creating something permanent. However, Rowena hopes one day to get an unfurnished flat and when she does she has promised to "let herself go" with interior decorating, in which she is very interested.

Rowena's favourite role is that of Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*. As for her favourite partner she finds it difficult to single one out, because there are so many good young male partners today, but she has a sentimental preference for Michael Somes because he partnered her at her debut, and in most of her important roles.

Wherever she goes a cine camera is in her luggage—taking films on her dancing tours is one of her pet hobbies—but she is fond of drawing and painting too—when time permits. Like most dancers Rowena has a mascot—a pair of miniature *poi-pois*, a Maori emblem.

Photos left to right

1. Queen of the Wilis in *Giselle*.
2. Ballerina in the Red Dress in *Birthday Offering*.
3. Swanilda in *Coppelia*, Act III.
4. Odette in *Swan Lake*, Act II

All photographs by Houston Rogers.

Roles danced

Blue Skater in .. .. .. *Les Patineurs*

Dawn, Swanilda } in .. .. .. *Coppelia*

Songbird Fairy, Golden Vine Fairy, Blue Bird, Princess Aurora } in .. .. *Sleeping Beauty*

Odette-Odile, Pas de Trois } in .. .. *Swan Lake*

The Yellow Girl in .. .. *Ballet Imperial*

Principal part in .. .. .. *Scènes de Ballet*

Principal part in .. .. .. *Variations on a Theme by Purcell*

Ballerina in the Red Dress in .. *Birthday Offering*

Fire in .. .. *Homage to the Queen*

Myrtha in .. .. *Giselle*

One of the Friends in .. .. *Boutique Fantasque*

BRYAN ASHBRIDGE

MEN IN BALLET

By SONIA ROBERTS

IT was a great disappointment for Bryan Ashbridge when the tour of New Zealand, which he was to have made with Rowena Jackson, had to be partially cancelled owing to the ballerina's recent operation for appendicitis, because he regarded this trip—and their joint appearance at the Auckland Festival—as an event of major importance in his career.

"Although I feel that being able to dance even such roles as Orion in *Sylvia* and The White Skater in *Patineurs*, with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, is a most satisfying experience, like all dancers I hope that one day I shall have the opportunity to dance leading roles in the great classical ballets. At present they have not come my way at Covent Garden, but during our tour Rowena and I were to have danced a repertoire which included excerpts from *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*, as well as the *Don Quixote* pas de deux. Ten weeks of dancing roles like that every night would mean that you either come back a good dancer, or else dead of exhaustion."

However, he is now looking forward to the four weeks he will dance in Australia, when with Rowena Jackson, he will join up with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes for a season with the Borovansky Ballet at Sydney and Melbourne. Afterwards Bryan and Rowena hope to fly to New Zealand for a six-day appearance at Auckland commencing 25th June.

It is one of Bryan Ashbridge's unfulfilled ambitions to become the regular partner of Rowena Jackson, but he does not find a long period of adjustment necessary when he changes partners. "At one time I found myself dancing on alternate nights with Violetta Elvin and Svetlana Beriosova."

Bryan Ashbridge reflected that he may even hold the record regarding the number of Royal Ballet soloists and ballerinas he has partnered. In *Cinderella* alone, he has worked with Beryl Grey, Nadia Nerina, Anne Heaton, Rosemary Lindsay, Pauline Clayden and Julia Farron.

"Traditionally the ballerina is the central figure," says Ashbridge. "The male dancer must be strong and virile, he must have technique and stage presence, but his primary duty is to present his ballerina effectively but without any unnecessary fuss. It just never occurs to me to wonder if the expertise of the ballerina takes the limelight off my dancing. However, and I suppose all the boys would agree with me in this, I do like a ballet, such as *Checkmate* which has plenty of strong choreography for the men. *Checkmate* is one of the ballets I like most, both to dance in and to watch. I enjoy watching ballet. Although of course I do not get the opportunity to see many performances by our own company I do try and see as many visiting companies as possible. I enjoy abstract ballet as well as the classics, but I think abstract ballet

Photo : Houston Rogers

has to be first class to be successful. A ballet such as *Symphonic Variations*, where the steps might almost have been composed at the same time as the music, is an example. I also think Ashton's *Scènes de Ballet* is a wonderful work. My favourite role however is Siegfried in the *Black Swan* variation. It has the advantage of a dazzling pas de deux plus the opportunity to combine technique and character interpretation."

However, it was not acting but athletics that first attracted this tall New Zealander to ballet. "I have always been interested in sport—I still am," says Bryan Ashbridge, the dancer whose idea of how to spend every summer Sunday is playing cricket (formerly for a Hampstead club and now for the New Zealand team in London). "My sports record always scotched any ideas my school friends might have had about dancing being only for the weak and effeminate, and I myself saw nothing incongruous about my twin schoolboy ambitions to play cricket for New Zealand at Lords and to dance leading roles at Covent Garden. It was therefore a great surprise to be greeted on my arrival in Britain with the legend that sport and ballet do not mix.

"I agree that weight lifting—which builds heavy ponderous muscles and slows the speed of natural movement—might not be a good idea for a dancer—but cricket, tennis, swimming, athletics and boxing need long, fast, flexible, rippling muscles the same as ballet," he concluded.

Ashbridge who was born in Wellington, New Zealand, began his dance training at the age of nine. "However, facilities for professional dance training do not exist at home—instead of class rehearsal and performance each day—dancers seldom do more than perhaps a half hour class a week," he explained.

"So when my teachers decided that I had some promise they sent me to Australia, to audition with Anton Dolin who happened to be there on a visit. It was after seeing him that I decided I wanted to be a dancer. I had private lessons from him and from Helene Kirsova, and for two years, I toured with the Borovansky Ballet. I was not a performer of course although I did occasionally appear as an extra. Although I missed my home and my friends I really didn't have very much time to be homesick. There was so much work to be done. I remember I took three R.A.D. exams in one year, a practice which I believe is now illegal, but when I was 13 war broke out and I was packed off home to New Zealand."

To many children such a change in plan might have been like the end of the world, but to quote Bryan Ashbridge, "at 13 you have no very definite ideas about what you want to do—everything is exciting." Although he had no more ballet classes from 1940-1944 he was seldom idle. He returned to school and studied for matriculation and threw himself whole-heartedly into the school's sporting activities gaining first eleven cricket and football colours. After completing his school days he served for a period in the New Zealand Air Force.

It was in March, 1947, that he came to Britain. It was a cold grey foggy day, and his first impulse was to get back on the boat and return to sunny New Zealand. "What prevented you following that impulse?" I asked. "A fine fool I'd have looked, dashing home to mother just because the weather was bad," he replied, his slight Antipodean drawl becoming more marked in this moment of amusement. "Besides I had to prove to myself whether I was a dancer—whether it was worth continuing in the career I had chosen—and I had a responsibility to the people who had provided the bursary which brought me to England."

The responsibility of a dancer to his company and to his audience is something that Bryan Ashbridge feels most keenly. "It is a very big thing to know that the success of a three act ballet depends largely on you." I am a dancer, who takes time to develop. For instance, I seldom give of my best at a first performance. It takes two or three performances for me to shake down into a new role. Although I was, of course, immensely pleased with the reception Rowena Jackson and I received at the Hungarian Gala performance, I realise I still have much to learn."

Today, ten years later, Bryan Ashbridge is still asking himself the question he asked on his first day in Britain: "Am I worthy of the career I have chosen?" Many people would say that he had already answered that challege most adequately, but for people like Bryan Ashbridge such questions can never be completely answered.

BALLET GUIDE

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

25th May	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Patineurs, The Firebird, Ballet Imperial*
25th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, The Firebird, Ballet Imperial*
29th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
30th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*The Shadow, Giselle* (Markova, Blair)
31st ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Nerina, Rassine)
1st June	Sat.	(mat)	*The Shadow, Les Sylphides* (Markova, Chatfield) *Petrushka* (Fifield, Shaw)
3rd ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*The Lady and The Fool, Les Sylphides* (Markova, Chatfield) *The Firebird* (Nerina, Hynd)
5th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Shadow, Giselle* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
7th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, The Sleeping Beauty, Act III* (Markova, Blair) *The Lady and The Fool*
8th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair)
8th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
10th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
12th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Noctambules, The Sleeping Beauty, Act III* (Markova, Blair) *The Firebird* (Nerina, Hynd)
15th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*The Lady and The Fool, Giselle* (Markova, Blair)
15th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*The Lady and The Fool, Petrushka* (Nerina, Grant), *Les Patineurs*
18th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Linden, Hynd)
19th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
22nd ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Petrushka* (Fifield, Shaw), *Giselle* (Nerina, Rassine)
22nd ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Petrushka* (Nerina, Grant), *Giselle* (Markova, Blair)

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

May 25th—June 3rd	*Madrid*
June 6th—7th	*The Opera House, Cologne*
June 11th—15th	*Stadtheater, Zurich*
June 17th—23rd	*The Holland Festival*
July 1st for three weeks	*London Season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre*

(Booking for this season opens 17th June—Mailing list subscribers 10th June).

BALLET RAMBERT

May 27th	*Pavilion, Torquay*

FESTIVAL BALLET

May	6 to June 2	*Paris, Théâtre des Champs Elysées*
June	4 to June 8	*Stuttgart, Landes Theatre*
June	14 to June 23	*Milan, Teatro Manzoni*
June	25 to June 29	*Rome or Florence (Festival)*
July	1 and July 2	*Geneva, Open Air Theatre (Festival)*
July	3 to July 5	*Lausanne, Théâtre Municipal (Festival)*
July	9 to Sept. 7	*London, Royal Festival Hall*

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

June 25—28	*Barn Theatre, Dartington Hall, Devon. Evenings at 8 p.m.*
June 26, 27, 29	*Mats. at 2.30 p.m.*
July 1—3	*Globe Theatre, Royal Marines Barracks, Plymouth. Evenings at 8 p.m.*
July 4—5	*Queen's Hall, Barnstaple. Evening at 7.30 p.m.*
July 5	*Mat. 2.30 p.m.*
July 6	*The School Theatre, Wiveliscombe at 2.30 and 7.30 p.m.*
July 8—9	*Pavilion Theatre, Exmouth. Evening at 7.30 p.m.*
July 9	*Mat. 2.30 p.m.*
July 10	*Priory School Hall, Exeter at 7.30 p.m.*
July 11—12	*Manor Pavilion Theatre, Sidmouth at 8 p.m.*
July 13	*Bridgwater Arts Centre at 3 and 8 p.m.*
July 15	*Theatre Royal, Bristol. For one week. Evenings 7.30 p.m., mats. 3 p.m.*

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FRANCE—(*contd. from Page 8*)

Parlic: *Le Conte Chinois* (music by K. Baranovic), *Le Mandarin Merveilleux* (music by Bartok) and *Le Coeur de Pain d'Epice* (music by K. Baranovic).

Le Conte Chinois was quite well danced by the star of the group, the slender and graceful Ruth Parnel and by the premier danseur Ivica Sertic who was full of bounce and fire. On the whole, however, the over-detailed action must be deplored for it makes the ballet too long and deprives it of vitality. This ballet which is in the classical tradition despite its claim to be a character ballet, is not very Chinese. We could even say that only the quite attractive costumes by Dusan Ristic have the national character.

Le Coeur de Pain d'Epice is a charming folkloric ballet, well directed but not particularly outstanding. The costumes by Milica Babije Jovanic were pretty and colourful.

The company succeeded much better with *Le Mandarin Merveilleux* by Bela Bartok, which was danced in a modern, very realistic style with at times a brutal eroticism which was very striking.

Bela Bartok placed the action in an Orient typical of the *Mille et une Nuits*. In this production, it was set in a large town and the travellers were tricked and lured into a basement where they were robbed by the protagonist aided and abetted by three gangsters. The décors and costumes by Dusan Ristic are perfectly conceived. Stevan Grebeldinger is the mandarin who cannot die until he has been given a loving kiss by the girl. Passion linked with anguish are masterfully portrayed by him. The choreography by Dimitrijé Parlic is powerful and dynamic even if it is not entirely original.

Jean Babilée has reformed a company with 15 dancers and has begun a tour of France with his repertoire. The star of the company is Paula Hinton.

The remarkable work carried out by the Musée d'Art Orientale Guimet and the Association Française des Amis de l'Orient in spreading knowledge of Asiatic dances deserves mention. During March and April, it has been possible to see and admire first of all the Indonesian dancers, Radeh Mal Jodjatna and Roemalai Selah and then the celebrated Indian dancer Sukhendu Dutt, in a recital of Indian dances in the Manipuri, Kathak and Kathakali styles.

Denise Bourgeois, star dancer of the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, has just left that company to take a leading role in the revival of the operetta *Valses de Vienne* at the Théâtre du Châtelet. Her partner is Louis Diaz who recently accompanied Lycette Darsonval on her tour of the United States.

The company of Maria Angelica gave a season at the Théâtre de l'Etoile which has specialised in Spanish dancing. She is a very beautiful danseuse but her company on the other hand is rather dull and uneven. The Imperio Argentina company which followed is unquestionably of a much finer standard. Imperio Argentina a Spanish singer and formerly also a star of the Spanish cinema, has a certain class, plenty of attack and she is an excellent artist. The principal danseur, Juan Morilla, who danced Chabrier's *España* on the stage of the Scala, Milan is an excellent partner and performer. The other members of the company are of a good standard.

The Ballet 56, led by Milorad Miskovitch and under the direction of Irène Lidova, have toured Italy, visiting Palermo, Rome, Milan, Genoa, etc., during March. The programme consisted of *Promethée* by Maurice Béjart and *L'Echelle* by Dick Sanders amongst other works. In May, Milorad Miskovitch, the company and Colette Marchand as guest artist will leave for South America.

The success of the Ballet Hongrois in Paris has not abated. Their second series of presentations at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, after dancing recently at the Alhambra, received the same response. The love of dancing which emanates from all the artists is one of the great assets of this company in which the unity of the ensembles is remarkable. These Hungarians have become so acclimatised on the banks of the Seine that the wedding of three couples from the company on March 29th became a very Parisian occasion. Chennevières sur Marne is a small town on the banks of the Marne and it is there that the weddings took place. The mayor, wearing a tricolour sash round his waist, solemnly united Maria Laczko and Mihaly Zsely, Margit Dravucz and Laszlo Osvath. One of the three couples backed out at the last moment. They asked for time to think it over.

Ingrid Bergmann, Serge Lifar, Yvette Chauviré and Michel Auclair, the cinema star, were the witnesses. The Hungarians danced in the streets of the little town to the music of gypsy violins and at a luncheon on the small island in the Marne which is aptly called l'Ile d'Amour, the newly-weds were surrounded by a host of Parisian personalities.

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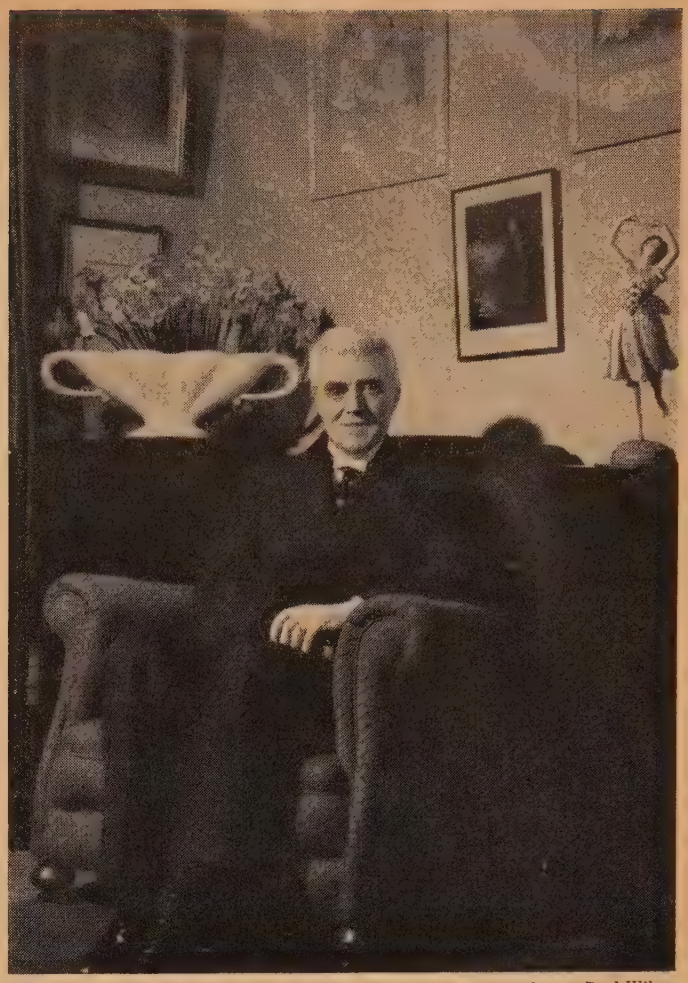

Photo: Paul Wilson

CYRIL BEAUMONT

A BENIGN, white-haired gentleman with a friendly, boyish face and a look of understanding tolerance in his kindly blue eyes—that is Cyril Beaumont.

Although he has been styled the greatest living historian of ballet, he is quietly unpretentious, never suggesting by word or manner the "chi-chi" which so often floats like a cloud around the dilettante ballet set. For him, ballet is a job that must be treated with business-like sobriety. Yet he has contributed perhaps more than any other to the popularity that ballet enjoys in the world today.

His original start was modest enough. Son of a distinguished inventor of electrical engineering gadgets—in the days when electricity was new—he was at first expected to follow his father in a technical career, and started training as an analytical chemist. He soon found, however, that taking a degree in chemistry meant swotting at a succession of subjects which were by no means so congenial to him.

It was a somewhat disgruntled and frustrated student who, taking his daily walk from a West Central technical college on his way home, passed through Charing Cross Road and lingered longingly over the bookshops. Charing Cross Road had become a recognised book centre, the former mecca of book-lovers, Holywell Street, having been swept away in the demolition which made space for Kingsway at the beginning of the century.

One bookshop in particular proved a magnet for young Cyril. It was kept by a man called Frank Godwin, who specialised in first editions of the 1890's—early Shaw, Henry Arthur Jones, the Abbey Group of Playwrights, George Moore, and so on. He often stopped for a chat with the proprietor, who one day confided to him that he was anxious to dispose of his business and settle in the North. A conference in the Beaumont family followed; and as it became quite clear that Cyril would never make a really fervent analytical chemist, his father agreed to buy the bookshop and let the boy see what he could make of it. Unfortunately, the fond parent did not live long enough to witness its quite unusual success.

At first Cyril continued the policy of his predecessor, dealing mainly in late Victorian first editions. But one day, his lady assistant—who eventually became his wife—mentioned that Anna Pavlova was about to launch a ballet season at the Palace, and suggested he ought to go and see her. She had herself already seen some performances by the great Russian dancer, Tamara Karasavina, and was immensely impressed.

From that time onwards they have not missed a ballet first night for nearly 50 years!

His interest in the new art prompted Cyril to include books on dancing in his regular stock, and when customers came in, he was always ready to give them the benefit of his own experience in a field on which he was fast becoming an authority. And he was still just a member of the ordinary paying public!

"One of my greatest prizes came in 1918," he said in an interview with BALLET TO-DAY. "I had on my own initiative started a series of monographs entitled "Impressions of the Russian Ballet," and this brought me into direct contact with Diaghilev, who considered my work useful enough to make a present of a pass which admitted me to the performance whenever I cared to look in. Grigorieff, the regisseur, was also very nice to me, and under these favourable auspices I was able to get my first glimpse behind the scenes.

"People sometimes think that, looking back over a long period, one is inclined to remember a past seen through spectacles which were altogether too rosy. But I do not agree. The figures in the ballet world during the early part of the century were quite outstanding personalities.

"At the Alhambra, the exceptionally large Green Room gave a privileged visitor the chance of watching the whole production machinery in action at close quarters.

"In one corner, you would find Diaghilev enthroned, always a little aloof—everyone stood rather in awe of him. He would receive callers like a prince giving an audience, but he was never without a string of followers. Sometimes artists would call in to submit designs, and there would be long and most interesting discussions, the air electric with new ideas. In another corner, you would find the musical director holding his own conferences. World-famous composers would drop in; and always, of course, there were the world's most cherished ballet stars, eagerly pursuing the drama and comedy of their own day-to-day existence. I realised that thousands of balletomanes would have given a great deal to be admitted to even one of these off-stage scenes which I constantly had the privilege of witnessing. I would see the opening ballet, go through the pass door to the Green Room for the whole of the interval, then return to my seat for the second ballet, and so on.

"I think it was Lopokova who first introduced me to Cecchetti, which filled me with the ambition to record the Cecchetti method of dancing in classical ballet. I had not the courage to suggest it to the maestro himself, so I started on the work in collaboration with Idzikowski; but when this popular dancer went on tour, I was left high and dry, so I turned to Cecchetti in despair. To my delight he at once fell in with the proposal, and although we had endless difficulty in getting the technical drawings made—they were eventually done by Randolph Schwabe, then head of the Slade School—the book duly appeared in 1922, and it led to the founding of the Cecchetti Society, of which I was elected chairman, a position I still hold. Many dancers who have since become famous were among the earliest members,

continued on next page

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New Books

Second Steps in Ballet. By Thalia Mara. (*Constable*, 8*s.* 6*d.*)

This little book is complementary to one by the same author—*Ballet: Home Practice for Beginners*—reviewed in these pages last year, and I have equal pleasure in recommending it. Whereas the previous one dealt with exercises at the barre, this is concerned with those elementary centre exercises that will help the student to acquire balance, form, and strength. The author, however, is careful to point out that such things cannot be learnt from a book alone—not only is it disheartening, but also it is absolutely essential to study under the guidance of a good teacher, otherwise faults will creep in that may ruin for ever the student's chance of success. But there still remain the many hours of practice at home, and that is where this book will greatly help the intelligent child to make the most of what he or she has learnt in the classroom. There are many illustrative drawings and the caricatures are fun.

PIGEON CROWLE

Igor Youskevitch. By Rod Quiros. $2.95.

As the first book by Dance Press, a new publishing firm devoted entirely to dance and the related arts, this thin volume is exemplary of what a brief biography should be. Mr. Quiros' discussion of Youskevitch as a person and as a dancer is concise, analytic rather than adulatory, and amply illustrated by photographs of the danseur and his ballerinas. The editors of Dance Press invite authors on dance to send new manuscripts. Their address is 20 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

GEORGE JACKSON

The World of Dance. Text by Jan Rey and photographs by Zdenek Tmej.

Although its title refers to the world, this big book is actually about folk dancing and classical ballet in Czechoslovakia. Originally published by Artia in Prague, an English edition has recently been released by Spring Books in London. Particularly interesting are those photographs which show the hybrid vigour achieved by crossing the imported Soviet ballet technique with the traditional Viennese-Milanese style practised at Czech opera houses since the days of the Hapsburg Empire.

GEORGE JACKSON

CYRIL BEAUMONT — *Continued from previous page*

including Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert, Derra de Moroda, Margarete Craske and Molly Lake. Two years later the Cecchetti Society joined forces with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, which now represents eleven different branches of the art.

"Following up my design to give dancers a basis of technical material to work upon, I brought out my translation of Thoinot Arbeau's "Orchésographie," which deals with 16th-century dance-forms—Peter Warlock made a grand job of transposing the music into modern notation. Then I translated and published Rameau's 18th-century "Maître à Danser," and rounded off the series with a translation of Noverre's "Lettres sur la Danse." "

This is only a small part of Cyril Beaumont's vast contribution to technical dance literature, covering 50 happy years as a ballet enthusiast, during which very few first nights—or indeed other nights—have passed without seeing him in his accustomed place in the stalls or in the wings. The bookshop in Charing Cross Road, which his father bought for him with so much misgiving, has become the most famous of its kind in the world, and his only regret is that the brilliant old scientist never lived to see the result of the venture, or to realise that, in his own way, his shy, retiring son, had become a "technical expert" after all!

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New Recordings

Reviewed by
BEDFORD CROWLE

SYMPHONY No. 6 (*Tchaikovsky*). *Boston S.O.* (*Monteux*). *HMV. ALP*1356.

Fokine's ballet, *Medusa*, was based on the Greek myth of the Gorgon, who was loved by Poseidon, the sea god, and slain by Perseus. Monteux's interpretation of this music—which has also been used for Nijinska's *Automne* and Theilade's *The Circle* among others—compares very favourably with any of his many competitors and he has been given a first-class recording. Do not fail to consider this disc before buying the Pathétique for your library.

SYMPHONY No. 2 (*Tchaikovsky*). *Paris Conservatoire Orchestra* (*Solti*). *Decca LXT*5245.

The recent revival of *Petrushka* by the Royal Ballet, having been produced under the supervision of Grigoriev and his wife, Tchernicheva, makes one realize that the great days of Diaghilev are not really so distant. *Le Festin* by Fokine was one of the ballets presented in Paris during that first famous season in 1909 at the Châtelet and the music of its Finale was taken from this symphony, the "Litte Russian". Solti gives a fine performance and the recording is excellent but, nevertheless, my own preference is for the Philips disc with Beecham conducting.

SYMPHONY No. 5 (*Dvorak*). *V.P.O.* (*Kubelik*). *Decca LXT*5291.

This most popular of Dvorak's symphonies is coming more and more within the realms of ballet, having been choreographed by Morenoff in Canada and more recently by Lallement in France. Who knows when it may appear on the home ground? Kubelik gives a thoroughly good all-round performance which will make this disc also popular.

VARIATIONS ON A ROCOCO THEME (*Tchaikovsky*). VIOLONCELLO CONCERTO (*Schumann*). *P. Fournier* ('*cello*). *Philharmonia Orchestra* (*Sargent*). *Columbia* 33*CX*1407.

Zachary Solov has had considerable success since he has been at the Metropolitan, New York, and other ballet companies have not been slow to add his ballets to their repertoire. *Rococo Variations* is one, set to Tchaikovsky's music, which is given a first-class performance on this disc. The fine rich tone of the 'cello, Sargent's care and attention and the excellent recording do more than justice to both works.

DOUBLE VIOLIN CONCERTO and VIOLIN CONCERTOS IN A AND E (*Bach*). *H. Merckel and D. Erlih* (*violins*), *Munich Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra* (*Redel*). *London DTL*93067.

Here is some of Bach's loveliest music and it was Balanchine who selected the Double Concerto for his ballet, *Concerto Barocco*. There is no sign of it leaving the ballet repertoire as the years have proved its worth. The players and the recording on this disc are good but if you can forgo the Concerto in A, then I prefer Columbia 33CX1373.

VALSE DE CONCERT No. 1 (*Glazounov*). FACKELTANZ No. 1 (*Meyerbeer*). *Belgian Radio S.O.* (*André*). *Telefunken TM*68014.

I think we may probably forget the Meyerbeer but every balletgoer will want Glazounov's *Valse*. With the excellent *Seasons* reviewed last month, we are building up Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, as the *Valse* is both the entrée and the finale. I hope these two discs will recall this ballet to you as vividly as they do to me.

NOCTURNES (*Debussy*). *Suisse Romande Orchestra* (*Ansermet*). *Decca LW*5283.

The music of Lifar's ballet, *Nuages et Fêtes*, is of course the first and second of these three *Nocturnes*. Ansermet has a very real feeling for Debussy and, as one expects, gives a sensitive performance. Unfortunately, the recording of my copy is a little edgy—perhaps I am just unlucky, so hear it first.

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DANCERS IN THE SUMMER EXHIBITION 1957

THEATRE people and places appear—from circus tent to ballet dressing-room—in this year's Summer Exhibition. Some are notable works; all are interesting.

My choice for the Three Star Award goes to James Wedgwood's magnificent pear-wood carving of two *Dancers*, easily rivalling Carpeaux' well-known work at the Paris Opéra. With this, place Beth Jukes' attractive half-figure of *Kumudini* in bronze; but it would have been better left bright, not maltreated with verdigris.

Disappointing is Dora Gordine's bronze piece, called *Dancing Torso*. It reveals but a notable derrière, sans tutu. Much more attractive is her head *April Brunner*. Sylvia Gilley's half-figure of *Belita* in bronze, features this much-publicised young lady, with hands in easy pose.

Laura Knight remains faithful to theatre and circus; here she has *Ballerinas*—three girls, or one girl three times?—in the dressing-room, to balance her proletarian dance at '*Appy* '*Ampstead* and circus *Clowns*.

Fascinating is *Fan-Dancing* by Yu-Lin-Pan, reminding us of our recent Chinese visitors; while there is a vague suggestion of *Petrushka* in *Les Poupées*. I noted *Two Buskers* (B. P. Batchelor) and G. W. Robins' *Tiller Girl* (not in working attire), while ritual display is indicated in Lord Methuen's *Palio at Siena*. Drawings include *Dancer in Repose* (A. G. Beach) and *Little Dancer* (M. K. Harrison).

Russell Flint has *Danza Lejana* (Distant Dance), but no more of those attractive water-colours from dancers such as Mme. Carmona. And we have in Britain no sculptor who portrays dance so frequently as did Malvina Hoffman in U.S.A. Charles Cundall is one of the few artists who "see" the modern world, as in his *TV at Wood Green Empire*.

W. G. RAFFÉ.

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THE EVENING OF BALLET

By DAVID BENN

ON May 4th the Association of Ballet Clubs presented its third Evening of Ballet at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre. The very good attendance was a pleasing sign of the interest which is now being taken in this movement. It was particularly gratifying to see such a large number of dancers there. Ann Horn and her husband, Dr. Bewick, were to be seen in the foyer greeting their many friends, while Norman Dixon had snatched a few hours out of a very full programme before hurrying away North, where he was to appear at Ingestre Hall the next week. Patricia Dyer, who has recently taken Noreen Sopwith's place in Ballet Rambert, and Thelma Litster were also among the visiting dancers; all of which goes to show that it is the dancer who carries on where the busman leaves off!

As readers of this series will know, this show is supposed to consist of the best items presented by affiliated clubs over the past two years. Certainly it must be taken as a cross-section of present-day trends in amateur choreography. But the cold and brutal fact is that the choreography, if we are to understand by this word creation of new forms of dance expression, was virtually non-existent. Most of the clubs showed facility in putting over their ideas with *existing* dance forms but this is dance arrangement.

The only attempt which could really be termed choreographic was John Purves' *Dead of Night* presented by the Phoenix Ballet Club. I have already referred to this ballet in a previous article and it is sufficient to point out how very much more polished it has become in the last six months. Joseph Cockerill has improved beyond all recognition and now seems to have a more profound understanding of what Mr. Purves is trying to express.

It was possibly unfortunate that *Brief Encounter* by Margery Gowland of the same club should have followed this work. The theme, that of a boy permitted by Death to have one last vision of his departed betrothed, inevitably gave rise to comparison with the previous item and to this it just could not stand up. But two good things do emerge from this ballet. One is the potentialities of one of the club's leading soloists, Poppy Bowhill. Her dancing is characterised by what one can only call "neatness." Her movements are well defined and show the necessary confidence in her own ability to project her personality across the footlights; all of which provides a very pleasing over-all effect spoilt only by sporadic bursts of unmusicality. The other thing is a refreshing economy of movement. Every step was in some way relevant to the theme.

Miss Gowland's other work *Dances from Masquerade* was an example of good arrangement and was well received. But there was nothing in it that one could "get one's teeth into" and, consequently, nothing more one can say about it.

To analyse the Belfast Ballet Club's *The Golden Spinning Wheel* is indeed a tall order for there is absolutely nothing to analyse. Characters came on and off from both sides with some very sporadic and not very convincing mime but, somehow, never got round to dancing. It needed half a page of synopsis to explain the theme, a failing in itself for such a short ballet, and at the final curtain I was still at a loss to know what it was all about. It was really doomed to failure from the start by casting a woman as the King. Yet their one male dancer, who could have quite easily handled the part, was relegated to the rather insignificant role of a Hermit. As for the decor, perhaps the less said about this the better, but they might at least have produced a spinning wheel that *looked* like a spinning wheel.

The Masque Theatre Club presented two items. *Clair de Lune* by Bridget Kelly Espinosa was possibly the only ballet which did not go on too long. In fact it would have been greatly improved had it gone on longer for, choreographically, it had good possibilities which were not given sufficient time to materialise.

Everything in their other ballet *Headlines* has been seen before in countless Hollywood musicals. But it would be an error of criticism to write it off on this account. To transfer a dance form from the musical to the ballet stage is not the simple matter of plagiarism that one might suppose although it does preclude originality. The choreographers handled the idea very tastefully and, I rather fancy, with their tongues in their cheeks.

The final item was provided by the Enfield Ballet Club entitled *Les Dames en Rose* and I would be doing this club a great disservice if I neglected to point out that several members of the audience expressed the opinion in my hearing that this was the best item of the show. On the other hand I would be hypocritical to agree, for I do not consider it either prudent or possible to arrange the items we saw in any order of merit. In lack of dance invention this work was among the "chief of sinners" but Maria Balinska certainly made very full use of the strong team of actors and actresses at her disposal. The three Chaperones scored one of the greatest successes of the whole ballet with their facial expressions as they walked, or should I say Victorianly waddled, across the stage. The two Gentlemen, with a few very simple movements, had us waiting for them to remove their tail-coats and start a fight. From personal experience I am well aware of the difficulties involved as regards scenery unless a club has unlimited means but, nevertheless, this work would be greatly improved by some rather more adventurous decor.

Overall impressions are often arbitrary and apt to be misleading but one is struck by the lack of ambition (and by this I mean rather more than lack of originality) which characterised every work except *Dead of Night*. It does show up the crying need for new ideas in all spheres of ballet production and above all a far more adventurous approach to ballet if this art is not to become stagnant.

CLUB NEWS

LONDON

The London Ballet Circle present the City Ballet Society, with guest artists Gillian Lynne and four members of the Royal Ballet, at King George's Hall, Tottenham Court Road, W.C.1, at 7.30 p.m., on June 14th. Details of programme and tickets from Mr. Chidgey, 4, Merrivale Avenue, Ilford, Essex.

NEWCASTLE

Having performed three ballets at the Association of Ballet Club's Evening of Ballet at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre, London, during May, the Phoenix Ballet Group are appearing at the Gateshead Little Theatre from the 19th to the 22nd June inclusive, when a number of new ballets will be presented.

In addition the Group are providing the dancing for the Newcastle and District Amateur Operatic Society's production of *Carousel* at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, during the week commencing October 14th. This will be followed by another appearance at the Gateshead Little Theatre in November for a few nights.

GLASGOW

On June 1st the Glasgow Ballet Club is giving an Evening of Ballet in the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow.

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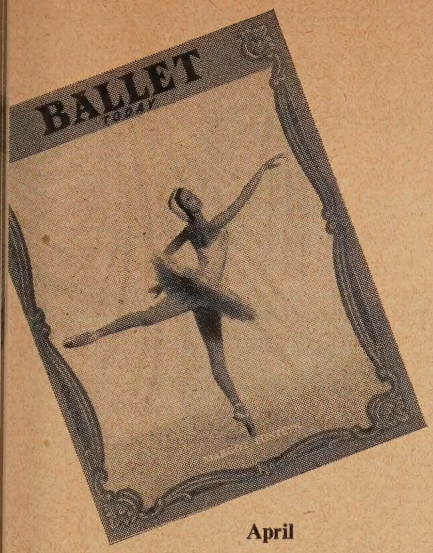

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THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCING AWARDS

Above: The highly coveted Final Award for fifth-year students was this year won jointly by 14-year-old Janet Lewis of London (left) and 17-year-old Dorothy Nichol of Edinburgh (right). This particular award consists of a sum of money for use in further vocational training.

Right: Every student completing the fifth year is presented with a copy of "A Picture History of Ballet" by Arnold Haskell, together with an autographed card from the Academy's President, Dame Margot Fonteyn de Arias. Seen with the students is Miss Pamela May.

Top right: The Plender Cup, awarded annually to the most promising second-year girl student, for technical ability and promise, in the Southern Area, was this year won by Julia Murthwaite of Harrow. Miss Phyllis Bedells, famous teacher, and herself formerly a dancer with Pavlova, presented the cups at the Royal Academy of Dancing in London on 27th April, 1957.

Below: The Smith Cup, an annual award to the most promising second-year boy student in the Southern Area was presented to Robert McFeat of Beckenham, Kent.

All photographs by Brian Worth.

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